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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: RESTRUCTURING OF FEDERAL MINISTRIES

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11. (SBU) The Nigerian Federal Executive Council announced a reorganization of federal ministries and parastatals on December 13. Some ministries were eliminated, some merged, and responsibilities moved. The number of ministries will be reduced from 28 to 19; however, some offices, agencies and commissions within the Presidency will be elevated to cabinet-level in order to satisfy constitutional requirements for equal representation of the 36 states. The reorganization is reportedly aimed at eliminating duplication of functions and reducing corruption in the public service. Changes are to take effect from January 2007 and a committee headed by the Secretary of the Government has begun work to make necessary legislative changes.

MINISTRIES NOT AFFECTED

12. (SBU) Only seven of the existing twenty-seven ministries are not affected by the reorganization. They include the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Justice.

CHANGES TO BE MADE

13. (SBU) According to statements from the Ministry of Information, the following changes will be made:

-- The Ministries of Transport, Works and Aviation will merge to form the Ministry of Transportation.

-- The Ministries of Commerce and Industry will merge to form the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

-- The Ministries of Police Affairs and Internal Affairs will merge to form the Ministry of the Interior.

-- The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the National Orientation Agency are merged to form the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation.

-- The Ministry of Integration and Cooperation in Africa will be eliminated and its functions taken over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

-- The Ministry of Petroleum Resources will become the Ministry of Energy, which will assume responsibility for coal from the Ministry of Solid Minerals and power functions from the Ministry of Power and Steel.

-- The Ministry of Power and Steel is eliminated and the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development will become the Ministry of Mines and Steel Development, which will take over steel-related responsibilities.

-- The Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs, Youth Development and Special Duties is eliminated. Youth programs will be the responsibility of a newly created Ministry of Youth. Ecological funds will be managed by the office of Secretary to the Government of the Federation.

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-- The Ministry of Sports is eliminated and a new commission handling sports established within the Presidency.

-- The National Planning Commission is removed from under the purview of the Office of the Economic Advisor to the President and elevated to a cabinet-level commission.

COMMENT

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14. (SBU) It remains unclear how the new system will work, with some reports indicating there may be multiple Ministers heading some of the newly merged Ministries. Pol Assistant has been told that the new system will seek to outsource more GON functions. Given the high levels of corruption in Nigeria, outsourcing has often been associated with inflated contracts, kickbacks and of private firms hired to carry out tasks to which civil servants are also assigned.
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